

10 OCT 1962

SUBJECT: Critique of On the Tiger's Back, by Aderogba Ajao  
(Cleveland and New York: World Publishing Co., 1962)

1. The author of this short book is a literate and intelligent Nigerian who began his career as an ardent anti-British nationalist. Later, as a student in Great Britain in 1948-50, he became a member of the Communist Party, at the same time retaining a strong element of individualism in his political makeup. Subsequently, as a businessman in Europe, he was enticed to the East German frontier and in effect kidnapped by (apparently) the M.V.D. After a long period of softening up, he was sent to a school in East Germany where foreign students were trained as political activists and propagandists to further Communist subversion in their own countries. Here he remained for almost six years, undergoing intensive indoctrination in Communist ideology and methods of subversion. The subversion program consisted in training in small arms, rifle, and sub-machine guns, route marches, military drill, use of cover, the attack of strong points, political activism, and partisan warfare.

2. He became increasingly disillusioned with his experiences in East Germany. He was struck particularly by (1) the incompetence of the Communist planners, (2) the strained relations between the Russians and the East Germans, (3) the bad working and living conditions and the unhappiness of the people, (4) the dishonesty and cynicism of the East German authorities, (5) the atmosphere of lies, distrust, and barely concealed opposition which existed in East Germany, and (6) the Soviet power behind the scenes. In the end he was expelled from the university for recalcitrance and managed to escape to West Berlin and eventually return to Lagos. Back at home he developed a strongly nationalist and neutralist attitude, which he expounds passionately and clearly.

Recommendation:

I believe that the value of the book to us lies in (1) its portrayal of the Communist program for training in subversion--its weaknesses and strength, and (2) its description of the attitude of a highly evolved African toward the East and the West, neutralism, and nationalism. It is a warm, human document, written with much passion and a remarkable control of the language.

Chapters 10, 11, 14, and 15 (on Communist methods of subversion) would make interesting supplementary reading in the counterinsurgency course, and the final three chapters on the New Nigeria would be of value in connection with the study of the problems and attitudes of the emergent nations in Africa. The last chapters also contain significant statements on the possibilities of a Communist take-over in Central Africa. Hence the title--from the well-known limerick:

There was a young lady from Niger,  
Who smiled as she rode on a tiger.  
They returned from the ride  
With the lady inside,  
And the smile on the face of the tiger.